

The Art of Meditation

Your Guide
to
flawless
meditation

Om Swami

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Foreword

Much has been written about meditation. I have devoted thousands of hours to meditation in the past twenty years as I started at an early age. However, in the past few years, I greatly intensified my practice since irregular or light meditation had failed to yield any yogic results mentioned in various yogic texts. Meditation is a state of perfect equipoise, mental balance and super awareness. Samadhi in meditation comes with intense practice, thereafter it becomes effortless.

After I engaged in intense practice, that involved meditating for almost seventeen hours every day with a straight, uninterrupted stretch of ten hours, and when I persisted in my practice for months, the results manifested in their full glory. It reaffirmed my own faith in the system of meditation.

Prior to leaving for the Himalayas, where I meditated in caves and woods in extreme solitude and silence, I did try spells of intensive meditation even in the towns. They failed to yield any tangible results whatsoever, perhaps nothing beyond a state of relaxation and memory gain. Predominantly because the environment in cities and all is a little too comfortable, it is distracting for the mind.

This book is a collection of my blog posts focusing exclusively on the topic of meditation, common hurdles and how to overcome them. You can begin your practice sitting in the comfort of your home, but as you progress, you will need solitude, you will need to build the intensity of your practice to gain significant results.

Meditation requires a certain resolve. In one of my other e-books called Seven Yogic Practices, I have listed practical and easy to do exercises you can adopt to be a master of meditation and your own life. A tamed and focused mind can accomplish anything you can imagine.

Peace.

Swami

Meditation of Two Types

Meditation is primarily of two types. One is called concentrative meditation, also referred to as fixed attentiveness, and the other one is called contemplative meditation, also known as analytical investigation. A good meditator is skilled at both. It is the meditator's ability of staying on one thought for as long as he wants that determines the quality of his meditation. An important point to remember is that meditation is a skill, it is an art. It can be learned by the determined and mastered by the persistent. There is only one way to learn this skill, that is: practice, careful practice at that. And, there is only one way to master this art, that is: intense practice, persistent intense practice at that. Guided practice increases your chances of success multifold provided such guidance comes from a practical source, from an experienced teacher and not just a preacher, from an expert doer and not a smooth talker. If your guide cannot sit with perfect stillness, he may offer you a wealth of bookish knowledge but will remain incapable of guiding you from practical standpoint, much less impart any wisdom on the subtleties of meditation.

Concentrative Meditation

In this type of meditation, the meditator stills his thought and settles his mind on an object of concentration. (Refer to my e-book *Seven Yogic Practices* for exercises on building one-pointed concentration). This method is specifically designed to help the practitioner achieve stillness of the body and mind. Until you are able to achieve perfect stillness, you will not be able to lose body-consciousness, that is, you will continue to have distracting awareness of your body during your sessions of meditation. And till such time that you are able to completely rise above your body, you are not going to experience any cosmic oneness. Until you are able to achieve perfect stillness, all your experiences are mere intellectual fabrication. They have no intrinsic value and remain mostly meaningless. Such experiences are not replicable.

They do not purify, cleanse, guide or strengthen you. This is the harsh truth. An intense practice of concentration stills the ten vital energies in your body helping you gain complete control in sitting still like a rock with ease.

Concentrative meditation is the first step. If you are unable to concentrate on the desired object for as long as you want, you are not ready for any contemplation or analytical investigation. Predominantly because the mind is still restless it means. A restless mind is incapable of carrying out penetrating analysis with discerning wisdom. Once you master concentration, supranormal awareness and super-consciousness emerges naturally. My goal is to share with you the methods, obstacles, ways to clear them, deviations, aberrations, and various stages of this practice. If you are truly serious about becoming a great meditator, absorb the message in this book and put it to practice. Do not rush; take your time. This is the foundation. Even if you are sure that you have the messaging figured out, read them still. Once done, read the ones on concentration one more time. Unless you grasp the importance of those practices, you will find it hard to champion concentrative meditation.

Contemplative Meditation

After you have attained the ease of body and ability to settle your mind, anytime at will, anytime at your discretion, for however long you want, are you ready for contemplative meditation. When practicing meditation of this type, you will automatically gain remarkable insight into the true nature of things, the realities of different planes of existence and into many things beyond words. Super knowledge will sprout. There is a term used in meditation texts called *acala vipāśayanā*, insight devoid of mental activity. Monier Williams Sanskrit dictionary defines *vipāśaya* as unfettering, or without a trace. And that is the key: when no trace of conditioned mind is left, when you gain an insight rising above your intellect, above all calculations, above logic, that is transcendental knowledge, true insight. It has come

from within. It is not the product of some conditioning, cogitation or deliberation. This is the output of contemplative meditation. This is an advanced practice. I will shed some light on it in due course.

The Practice of Concentrative Meditation

Concentrative meditation is the art of staying on one thought. It is specifically different to contemplative meditation in the sense that no intellectual examination is performed while practicing this meditation. It is predominantly designed to help you settle your mind and attain stillness of the body. In a way, concentrative meditation is the preliminary practice of meditation. As you continue to practice, you will experience an inexplicable calmness, bliss will engulf you, a definitive quietude will dawn on you.

yatrōparamatē cittam nirud'dham yōgasēvayā /

yatra caivātmanātmānam paśyannātmani tuṣyati / (Bhagavad Gita, 6.20)

With the constant practice of yoga, in that state of perfect stillness of the mind, the yogi experiences his true nature. With his supremely purified self, attained as a result of meditation, he remains firmly established in his primordial state.

Further, in the same chapter, he instructs:

śanaiḥ śanairūparamēdbudhyā dhṛtigrhītayā /

ātmasanstham manah kṛtvā na kiñcidapi cintayēt / (Bhagavad Gita, 6.25)

Steadily, with practice, such yogin should meditate with patience and resolve, constantly bringing his wandering mind back to the Divine. He should meditate on the Divine, the Supreme, and do nothing else during his practice.

Various Buddhist texts on mediation share the same view. Notably, *Madhyamaka Hridya* states:

If one is overcome with distraction, one should retreat and regard it as a sign of diversion.

And, *Prajñāpāramitā* documents that firm concentration pacifies craving for sensory pleasures.

Stillness of the body and mind comes with great practice. Let me get to the actual practice; as follows:

1. Sit in a comfortable posture, preferably crossed legged.
2. Keep your back and head straight. Neck, slightly bent, just only.
3. Abandon all body movements.
4. Yoke your focus on any object.
5. Maintain great mindfulness.

Each time your mind wanders off, bring it back to the point of focus. Over time you will develop razor-sharp awareness; so that, you will become aware of each emerging thought before it turns into a distraction.

Correct posture plays a significant part in right meditation. I will cover the importance and benefits of correct posture when we get to Physical Transformation. For now, just know that a steady, comfortable and right posture helps you gain control over the five primary energies and the act of concentrative meditation stills the five secondary energies. Manipulation and channelization of the energies will help you maintain one posture for as long as you want.

It is particularly important to note that during concentrative meditation, you must stay away from all intellectual examination, contemplation and cogitation. For example, let us say, you are meditating on a form. And you have, in front of you, an idol of Krishna you are meditating on. Do not start examining the characteristics of the idol or start thinking about Krishna, his pastimes, his life and so forth. Just keep your

attention focused at his form. In the initial stages, if you start contemplating before attaining one-pointed concentration, your mind will wander off and you may not even realize.

Do not accept, reject, examine, follow, engage in or pursue your thoughts. Do not act or react. Just gently maintain your concentration. (You may want to refer to my writing on one-pointed concentration to know the four types of objects for concentration in my e-book *Seven Yogic Practices*). Maintain short but crisp and lucid sessions of meditation. An untamed mind cannot stay on a thought for any longer than three seconds. I would recommend that rather than doing one session of forty five minutes, do three sessions of fifteen minutes. They will bring much greater benefit. Over time, as you get better, you can gradually increase the duration.

I would also like to tell you that there is no joy in concentrative meditation, in the actual practice. But once you start to experience a quiescent mind, you will almost be addicted to meditation.

Restlessness: First Hurdle in Meditation

I am going to share with you the four common defects of meditation. I cannot overstate the importance of understanding the four hurdles and applying the correct methods to overcome them. Please take all the time you need to grasp, understand and absorb them if you really want to become an excellent meditator.

Unless you make meditation a priority, you are unlikely to feel motivated to persist. You can read as much as you like, you can roam around the whole world, you can hear words of wisdom to your heart's content, you can be in the company of sages, anything external you can think of, that is not going to suffice for you to experience the exalted state. Ultimately, you have to do it yourself to taste the nectar.

Before I expand on the present subject, let me reiterate the goal of meditation: it is settling your mind and letting it operate in its natural, primordial and unmodulated state.

The usual scenario

Your present state of mind is conditioned by many such factors as evolution, society, beliefs, desires, intellect, second-hand knowledge and so forth. Coming off this conditioning allows the meditator to discover mind's true, original and pristine nature. As you sit down to meditate, after a few seconds, stray thoughts from all directions start to hit you. As you continue to try and build your concentration, you experience a certain degree of restlessness. It almost feels the more you try to stay away from your thoughts, the stronger they seem to come and get you making you restless. It is normal. Once you attain the transcendental meditative state, you no longer try, thereafter, you simply maintain your state.

The foremost hurdle

The first obstacle is restlessness. It may be in the form of anxiety, resentment, excitement or sensual stimuli. It is normal for all beginners, intermediate and advanced meditators; only the adepts are spared, that too by sheer virtue of their practice and experience. The difference between an adept and an aspirant is that the former is aware of the restlessness as soon as it arises and promptly uses the mental application to pacify his mind, whereas an aspirant allows such mental restlessness to overpower him destabilizing his otherwise settled mind.

When you experience restlessness, and as it builds up, during your meditation, you may feel the uncontrollable urge to move, shift, talk, and or even end your session. Thoughts in the form of emotions, experiences, plans and analysis linked to past or future may make you anxious, excited or aroused. A lingering thought over some right or wrong action may cause resentment. All of these are thoughts and they will make you restless. During the practice of concentrative meditation, you must not engage in any cognitive activity of examining right or wrong, good or bad and so forth. Just remember, they are all thoughts and learn to drop them and rise above them for lucid sessions of good meditation. Do not be impatient when restlessness emerges. The cause is natural, and, the remedy, simple.

Restless Mind: A grumpy toddler

Let me use a simile to help you understand the cause of restlessness:

Imagine you are walking through a shopping mall. You have a three year old toddler with you. As he is happily holding your hand making you feel proud of his behavior and obedience, he spots a candy store with flashing signs, attractive display, animated cartoon characters and everything else he could possibly fancy. He wants to go to the store. You, however, have other plans and want him to simply be with you. He insists on going in the direction of the candy store, you tell him otherwise. His efforts

intensify as does your grip on him. His volume gets louder, and, your stance, more commanding. He is unmoving and you are unyielding. He gets agitated, decides to lie down on the floor and starts throwing tantrums. At that point in time, you have four choices:

- a. Let him throw tantrums while you feel somewhat embarrassed in the public,
- b. try to pacify him with the promise of taking him there in the future,
- c. take him to the candy store, and,
- d. overpower him, lift him and rush to the parking lot.

It is not a desirable situation and none of the options seem to be pleasant. This is exactly what happens when your mind becomes restless. It starts to behave like the grumpy toddler. It tries all sorts of tricks to get its way.

The cause

When you are meditating and you try too hard to concentrate, your mind becomes restless. At that moment, it wants to break free of the obedience of posture, concentration and stability. Conditioned mind is not designed to operate according to you, it is strong enough to lead so that you follow what it wants. These are what tendencies of the mind are, they are all thoughts but they are the ones you find hard to let go. Restlessness is caused when you want to discover the natural by employing unnatural methods, when you want to curb rather than understand, when you aim to ignore rather than abandon, when you hold instead of letting go. Good meditation is about acceptance, awareness, attitude, and balance. This is the skill one needs to acquire— achieving that balance and maintaining it all times. It is not just about sitting still for the sake of it, for, if it was, most animals would be great meditators; it is not about closing your eyes and pretending there are no thoughts, if this was

meditation, all hibernators would be exceptional meditators. It is about maintaining a harmony, that natural state of your mind.

The remedy

The best way to overcome restlessness is to stop meditating at that moment. Stay in the posture if you can but make no attempts to concentrate. Hold a little self dialogue. Just relax. Stop all efforts to meditate. Take a deep breath. Get into a self communion on any subject matter you like, not the one that will arouse you but something that will give your mind a break from the act of concentration. If they fail to dissipate restlessness, just get up and take a break. Resume after some time. We have to distract the toddler till we pass the candy store. When your mind is tired, give it rest, when it is restless, pacify it. Pacify your mind. Talk to your mind. Give it a bait, do not be too hard for too long. We are teaching it discipline, we want it to move according to you. Be patient. Calm it down. Restlessness is normal and pacification is an art, a skill. Ever seen an expert dog trainer? A good trainer knows when to reward versus reprimand, when to leash versus let loose, when to be soft versus strong. Some may be naturally good at it, but the exceptional ones are often so on account of their practice, persistence and experience. Concentrative meditation is training the mind, when done, it automatically results in taming it.

As you progress on the path of meditation, you will learn how to be so that the kid never gets to see the candy store at the first place, or the toy store, or the swings. If he does not spot those, he will continue to be a happy child all the while you shop (read meditate). That comes with practice, with learning, with perseverance. I will continue to share the practices and methods as we prod along. For now, learn to pacify your mind during the moments of restlessness as stated in the sections above.

Can you imagine how empowered you are going to feel with a settled mind, a mind that has turned inward, the one that has learned to listen to you and not the other way around?

No candies, no tantrums!

Laziness: Second Hurdle in Meditation

As mentioned earlier there are four common flaws that prevent the meditator from experiencing oneness, that exalted state, the natural state of mind. When a meditator stays course ceaselessly working on crossing the four hurdles, such aspirant, experiences profound sensations and bliss before long.

The second most common defect in meditation is laziness. It is of two types. Let us say that you have decided to meditate for forty-five minutes every day. That is your resolution. The first type of laziness makes you want to skip your meditation. Your conscious mind gives you excuses because it does not enjoy being tamed, it wants to go its own way dragging you along. Purity of discipline is paramount in executing any plan, be it meditation or any other routine. The only way to encounter laziness of this type is to not listen to your mind. If you sit down and vow to meditate no matter what, your conscious mind will eventually understand that you are the master and that you have no plans of showing any lax when it comes to following your discipline.

My present focus is the laziness of second type, the one you encounter while meditating.

The usual scenario

As you sit down to meditate, motionless, still in one posture, you enjoy the first few minutes. In the beginning, you are aware of the restless nature of the conscious mind. You work hard to channelize your thoughts, you exert to concentrate, you try to stay focused. When you do that, you experience restlessness. Such restlessness may prompt you to move, engage in thoughts or abandon your session of meditation altogether. The best way to overcome such restlessness is to relax at that point in time. However, as you relax, you run the risk of losing sharpness of the mind. Such

relaxation, if unchecked, can lead to inertness, inattentiveness, a kind of stupor, a torpid condition. If you are meditating by way of mental visualization for example, the image you were holding mentally dims and disappears. If you are meditating on a mantra, it becomes a superficial exercise of just mentally chanting the mantra and you are no longer hearing it, let alone becoming one with it. Basically, your meditation has lost its lucidity, its crispness and has now become a mostly useless activity of sitting still and nothing beyond that.

Laziness: A grave flaw

Attentiveness plays the most critical role in meditating correctly. Laziness during meditation can take the form of dullness of the mind or lethargy of the body. If your mind experiences dullness, a kind of sluggishness, the clarity of the object of meditation, the sensitivity of superconsciousness disappears. It is as good as sleeping. A session of meditation that is not clear, crisp and lucid, will not allow you to experience even a relaxed state of mind, much less its natural one. You will get up from your meditation feeling quasi relaxed, the type you feel after a nap. Often an overwhelming number of meditators mistake that for good meditation. Good meditation is not about putting your conscious mind to sleep, it is clearing it. Such clearing does bring bliss and sublime sensations with it. If a meditator gets into the habit of meditating incorrectly without actively working towards clearing the hurdles, it becomes extremely hard to get rid of such flaws later.

Lazy Mind: A slow elephant, the slumbering python

A lazy mind in various meditational, yogic and tantric texts has been compared to the slow moving elephant. The hurdle of dullness is as big as the elephant. It is for this reason that many meditational deities are shown holding a goad, the weapon used to prod an elephant. The esoteric meaning behind such implement is to always hold the

goad of attentiveness, of alertness to control the elephant of sluggishness. Just like an animal as large as elephant, when in front of you, can obstruct your vision, laziness of the mind obstructs your path of bliss and oneness. Think of the hibernating python or the one in deep slumber. It is still, calm but that does not equate to meditation. If you are lazy or restless, however still you may be sitting, such meditation is a misnomer. A meditation full of flaws is like a pot full of holes; just like the latter is unable to carry water, the former is unable to retain bliss.

The cause

Imagine you are trying to move a big rock. You keep exerting your force. It is only natural that after a while you are going to feel exhausted and tired. Exactly the same thing happens with your mind. When you try hard to concentrate, and keep doing so even when you feel restless, there comes a time when you feel worn out and tired. If you are not attentive at that time, you will slip into stupor right that very moment. Such dullness compromises your meditation. In every likelihood, presuming you are physically fit, you will experience restlessness before feeling lazy. If you can take corrective measures at the time of restlessness, it becomes relatively easy to overcome laziness. Like an athlete who gradually builds his endurance, his physical strength raising his pain barrier, a good meditator steadily increases the duration of his meditation. At the peak of my own meditation practice, I used to meditate for a straight stretch of ten hours. It was not easy, but the results were astounding. I did not start sitting ten hours from day one, in fact, I started with multiple one hour sessions gradually increasing them over the course of many years. Correct posture is absolutely critical; I will cover that when we get to Physical Transformation.

The remedy

The moment you realize you are losing sharpness of your meditation, you need to exert, mentally that is. You must refresh your concentration. You need to remind yourself to focus. If your laziness has resulted from physical exhaustion, you need to stop meditating. That can happen, if your meditation sessions are longer than ninety minutes each. Under such circumstances, you should take a break, get up and inhale some fresh air, drink a little bit of water, walk around a bit and then resume your session. However, if you experience dullness as a result of mental exhaustion, something that can happen even after the first twenty minutes of your meditation, you must not get up and break your session. You should try to visualize bright light, or focus on the enchanting aspects of your object of meditation while staying in the same posture. You need to refresh and energize yourself without getting up or ending your meditation. Focus your attention elsewhere for the time being but do not engage in thoughts that are not linked to your meditation. As you feel fresh again, relax and resume your original meditation. You need not exert any longer. Because if you keep exerting, you will feel restless.

Balance is crucial. When you feel restless, relax; and, when you feel lazy, exert, concentrate. These two repeatedly interfere with your meditation. They almost take turns. You need attentiveness to identify and correct both flaws. Hold short but lucid sessions and gradually increase the duration. Learn to meditate flawlessly for short periods first. When you learn to harness laziness and check restlessness, you are very close to experiencing cosmic oneness. I never said it was easy. Remember that analogy of rope-walking?

Thoughts: Third Hurdle in Meditation

There are four primary hurdles, the pitfalls one has to constantly watch out for quality meditation and noticeable results. I elucidated the hurdles of restlessness and laziness in the previous posts. Today, I am going to shed light on the third hurdle: stray thoughts. Meditation is your ability to stabilize your mind on one thought, on your chosen thought, eventually becoming one with it. Such oneness gives birth to superconsciousness and super-knowledge. It only comes with intense effort and supreme one-pointed concentration. If you put in the quality effort, all else follows. Thoughts are inseparable from the mind just like heat from fire. The act of concentration requires you to make a conscious and exerting effort to focus on the desired thought. The art of meditation is to be able to hold that thought with perfect ease, without any undue exertion, with a sharp and still mind free of dullness and stupor. An adept is able to hold his session of meditation for as long as they want whereas an aspirant is able to meditate under favorable circumstances only, such as, pleasant surroundings, calm mind, no major stress, good physical health and so forth. The one who is still learning the art of meditation gets easily overpowered by stray thoughts. They act like rocks thrown in still water.

The usual scenario

Like the physical world outside, your inner world is interdependent and interconnected. For an instance: in the outside world, if there is no fuel, your car fails to move, if there is no road, there is nowhere to drive your car, if there is no energy, there is no way to run the fuel refineries, if there are no vehicles, there are no methods to transport the fuel and so on. Everything is interdependent. No independent phenomenon exists in the outside material world. However exhaustive you may examine, you will get to the same conclusion. One thing links to another. This is

exactly the case with your inner world of thoughts too. While meditating, if you fail to check the very first thought, be prepared to be bogged down by thousands more. Let us say during meditation, you feel thirsty. Naturally, you think water, from water maybe an instance of buying bottled water, the shop, swiping the credit card, from credit card your mind may jump to an incident when you purchased gasoline with it, that may remind you of gas prices, cost of living, your scarce resources, how you could or should have saved in the past, from savings, you may jump to future planning and on and on and on and on and on and on...Suddenly, you feel loss of focus, energy, and concentration. Had you got back to your object of meditation at the moment you thought of water, you would be saved from all the rest. That is how simple it is, or is it?

Stray Thoughts: A natural hurdle

The natural state of mind is like the quiet, expansive sea. Thoughts are like waves. They can be tidal at times. Restlessness can be compared to a sea storm. Laziness is like the floating ship that has its engines shut down and is simply going in the direction of the wind. Just like sea is not sea without waves, mind is not mind without thoughts. There is no mind without thoughts! Something worth remembering. Thoughts are a product of the conditioned mind. Meditation is about rising above the conditioned mind to regain its natural and original state. It is a sublime experience. Of all the hurdles in meditation, having thoughts is the most natural one. Since it is the result of millions of years of evolution, it is so ingrained, inbuilt, it is the hardest to overcome. It can be done with right practice.

The cause

This is one hurdle you need not hold yourself responsible for. The cause is evolution. Conditioned mind's natural tendency is to engage in thoughts. Anytime you pay attention, you will find yourself in thinking mode. During your meditation, as you

become increasingly attentive getting past restlessness and sluggishness, you are met with the hurdle of thoughts. This is a catch twenty-two situation. Thoughts cause restlessness and when unchecked, they also make you dull and tired compromising your meditation. However, as you continue to strike the balance between relaxation and exertion during your meditation, you start to gain control over your thought flow. They keep pouring though. You need not feel bad. This is natural. Thoughts have no intrinsic value or power. For as long as you have an awareness, you will have thoughts. With great practice, you are able to replace all your thoughts with the only thought you are meditating on. You may well be meditating on no-thought, on emptiness. Unwanted thoughts equate to hurdles and loitering. And! all thoughts are unwanted when you are meditating; saving of course, the one you are meditating on.

The remedy

Do not react at any thought. Simply, just drop it and get back to your point of meditation. Treat all thoughts with equal indifference. Do not examine or place any importance on any thought. There is a Sanskrit word frequently used in many tantric, yogic and meditation texts—*smriti*; it means memory or mindfulness. Only a vigilant mind can detect the emergence of a new thought. The key is to drop the thought as soon as it emerges. As you continue to practice your meditation with mindfulness and vigilance, thoughts not only become feeble but they almost stop emerging after a certain point. In that supreme quietude, when you continue your meditation with awareness, you inevitably experience transcendental bliss.

Images: Fourth Hurdle in Meditation

Over twenty weeks ago, we started our journey on understanding the Yoga of Self Transformation. I wrote that self transformation comprises of transforming oneself at four levels, namely, mental, emotional, moral, and physical. Without purification, understanding and transformation at all four levels, it is simply just not possible to attain the exalted state. I started with my writings on Mental Transformation. We went through various exercises to strengthen your concentration, resolve and knowledge. Of the four primary hurdles, we have already covered three. Today, as I finish my exposition on mental transformation, I bring to you the fourth common defect in meditation.

The usual scenario

Let us say you sit down to meditate with resolve and attentiveness. After a while you start to feel restless, you feel the urge to move or to end your session. A little while after you check restlessness by calming your mind, a sort of lethargy, dullness blankets you. Many people erroneously term it relaxation or a good meditative experience; a grave error. Good meditators, however, staying alert, apply mental exertion with attentiveness to overcome this hurdle. As you progress with a mind that is neither dull nor restless, the natural tendency to engage in thoughts spring up. Soon, you find yourself either pursuing a thought or actively engaging in it.

For example, you may recall a conversation, an unpleasant one. Forgetting that you are doing meditation, you start to mentally pursue that conversation, you start to think you should have said this or said that, or, you should have responded in such and such manner, how the person was ungrateful, shallow, rude, wrong and so on. Great meditators do not lose sight of their thought of meditation. They are able to simply drop the thought immediately putting a plug to the conversation. Now, they are not

restless, or dull, or pursuing thoughts but this does not mean they are meditating flawlessly. There is one more distraction you have to watch out for.

A subtle but strong defect

In a way, this is the greatest hurdle. It is innate, a natural fabric of conditioned mind. It does not leave you even when you are sleeping, causing dreams. As you cross the three hurdles and try to meditate, you will experience various images flashing in front of you from your past. They may seem unrelated. As you try to focus on your object of meditation, you find yourself battling with appearances, images stored in your memory. During your meditation you may have pictures of gadgets, cars, houses, buildings, ice-creams, food, people, creatures, anything for that matter, flashing in your mind. You are not engaging in any thought, you are not pursuing any mental conversation but you keep getting hit with these. They severely impede your ability to meditate correctly.

Images: The flowing wind

In any place, even if empty of all existence, there always exists air. Further, there is always movement in the air, however inert that may be. So, in a way, wind is omnipresent. Only a vacuum maybe devoid of such phenomenon. A vacuum though is an artificial construct, it is not a natural state. Similarly, even when a mind is empty of all thoughts, restlessness and sluggishness, there still exists memory. In fact, it is the basis of your analytical skills and your intelligence. You may be a Nobel laureate in physics, or a genius in calculus, in an unconscious state, in the absence of memory, however, you are unable to count even up to three. Does it not seem natural then, with intense meditation, as you gain new mental territory and cleanse your psychic imprints, you gain super-knowledge and superconsciousness?

The cause

Your memory is the source of all imagery. Anything you see or hear even once, always stays in your memory. Whether it is a giant ship or a needle sinking in the sea, it retains both. Always and forever. Just like creating a vacuum artificially, you can use methods to suppress such imagery, but they remain temporary measures. How can attainment of your natural and permanent state be dependent on anything artificial and temporary! In my opinion, it is not possible to erase your memory. It is possible to cleanse it though; to the degree that the image flashing in front of you fails to trigger any thought or emotion. Such cleansing is possible with emotional and moral transformation; I will cover them in due course. Only when you allow your inner wounds to heal can you remain unaffected at the appearance of any image in front of you.

The remedy

So, what do you do when you are in a windy area? You cannot battle or win against the wind. All you can do is to cover yourself, to not face the wind, to accept it. In much the same manner, there is no need to react to the images. You simply cover yourself with a balance of alertness and relaxation, exertion and pacification. Soon, images start disappearing. As you continue to meditate, intentionally recalling only the object of visualization each time, other images start to fade away automatically. Further, as you cleanse your psychic imprints, you recall less and less of disturbing, enticing or exciting images. Their impact becomes negligible and their recollection, faint. You are well on your way to experience lucid meditation thereafter.

This finishes my treatise on Mental Transformation. Coming up next, a brand new world for you, an original piece of work — Emotional Transformation.

Earn Good Karma

Ever wonder how The Law of Attraction works? It works in tandem with the law of karma. You always get what you give. It is like the echo phenomenon in the mountains. It shouts back at you whatever you say out loud. So, if you want peace, bliss, happiness, money, whatever you want to attract, learn to start giving it first.

If you liked this book and gained something out of it, I encourage you to earn some good karma by passing on the message to those you care about. Let more people benefit. Help spread the message and share this book with your friends.

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At various places in this book, I refer to charts/tables, in case you find them missing in your eBook version (ePub or Kindle format), you can go to my blog and type in some keywords, from the post, in the search box. Just following the search results for posts with charts etc.

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